(a) whether it is a fact that as provided under para 11 of Explanatory Notes to DOPT OM No. 36012/2/96-Estt.(Res.) dated the 2nd July, 1997 persons belonging to SC/ST and OBCs who are selected on merit are not required to be shown against the quota of vacancies/posts reserved for their communities; and

(b) if so, the number of persons belonging to SC/ST and OBCs who have been selected/recruited/promoted on merit to different categories of services and not counted against the "reserved quota of vacancies/posts" for those categories during the last three years under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Information is being collected and would be placed at the table of the House.

Provision of better tourist facilities

1638. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the light of negative trends in tourism industry especially after September 11, 2001 what measures have been taken to attract the private companies to this industry;

(b) whether there has been coordination between the Central and State Governments for providing better tourists facilities in different parts of the country; and

(c) whether there is any plan to study the tourism strategy of the various countries *e.g.*, Malaysia and Indonesia?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Ministry of tourism has drawn up a strategy to meet the adverse condition in the aftermath of the incident on 11th September, 2001 to propagate India as a safe and secure destination by stepping up marketing overseas, break new grounds in the countries in East and South, create conditions in which India attains reputation for ethical trade and business practice and give special boost to domestic tourism by promoting new facilities and infrastructure by encouraging investment by private companies in the tourism sector.

(b) Yes, Sir. The Union Government extends fiscal incentives to

prospective investors in the tourism field and also provides Central financial assistance to State/Union Territory Governments for construction of tourism facilities in different parts of the country based on the *inter-se* priority and availability of funds. Meetings are organised periodically to consult the State Government about various issues.

(c) No, Sir.

Potential of Ladakh as Tourist Destination

1639. SHRI KUSHOK THIKSEY: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in an interview to a National Newspaper 'he has cited the potential of Ladakh region as an important tourist destination' ; and

(b) whether Government have any specified plans and project to tap potential of the region as an important tourist destination?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government of India has initiated following steps to promote Ladakh region as an important tourist destination:

(i) Promotion of Ladakh region as a mystique, cultural and adventurous tourist destination in the overseas tourist generating markets by overseas Government of India Tourist Offices.

(ii) Holding of prominent festivals like Sindhu Darshan, Bauddha Mahotsav and Hemis festival regularly in Ladakh region to attract international as well as domestic tourists.

(iii) Arranging of familiarisation tours for media and tour operators to create awareness about Ladakh region in overseas countries.

(iv) Regular production of tourist brochures, video films CD ROMs and posters on Ladakh region by the Department of Tourism and overseas office.

(v) For improvement of Tourist Infrastructure in the region the following schemes have been undertaken:

(a) Supply of White Water Sports equipment